

Student loses job after 'insulting' radio show

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Student Media Commission members meet at 11 a.m. today to begin investigating an incident that occurred Oct. 16 on a WVCW late-night talk show.

As a result of the incident, Matt Harrison, a VCU student, lost the privilege to air his talk show and remains barred from working at WVCW again, said Station Manager Jennifer Girling.

The show, described as "insulting to gays, sleazy, profane and literally pornographic" by Martha Curtis, acting chair of the dance department, prompted a VCU student to file a formal complaint with the Division of Student Affairs.

No one at the station could have stopped the Oct. 16 show, Girling said, because no one was monitoring it. In the past, Girling said, WVCW did little screening for talk

shows aired on the station.

"If what I have heard is true, I would have pulled the plug," she said, adding that she had not yet heard a tape of the show.

Girling said WVCW apologized to the student in writing and on Oct. 23 aired another apology. In addition, the station will replay the apology at 11 a.m. Thursday. Since WVCW does not have a faculty adviser, Girling said she is "flying without a net."

"We're just students here being asked to make decisions commercial stations pay lawyers to," she said. "At some point somebody is going to say something that ticks somebody off."

To prevent further incidents, Girling said she plans to conduct a staff meeting on Thursday to review what can and cannot be said on the air.

"We've talked to the DJs before (and) apparently we have to do it again," she

said. "As far as I'm concerned, WVCW's involvement is over. We've done all we can; the rest is up to the university."

Robert Clifton, MCV's dean of student affairs, said he received the complaint on Oct. 24 from William Duvall, associate vice provost and dean of student affairs.

"Ninety-five percent of all cases are investigated," Clifton said. "We owe it to the accuser."

According to VCU's "Rules and Regulations," Clifton can take up to a year before deciding to take action after an investigation begins.

According to the e-mail received by the Commonwealth Times executive editor, Duvall requested that the Student Media Commission investigate the complaint. All regular student media fall under the SMC's governance including The Vine, Commonwealth Times, WVCW and Writer's Corner magazine.

If Clifton determines action should be taken against the accused, he can censure or place a student on probation. If the violation warrants a more severe penalty, the case is referred to the University Hearing Board. The board then can determine if the accused should be dismissed or separated from the university for up to two years.

Curtis said she wrote a letter to student affairs raising her concerns about the stigma associated with and carried by a male dancer.

"I hope people become enlightened to the power of media. There are a lot of narrow-minded views out there," she said. "People at the university are here to expand our perceptions and ways of dealing with each other. No student at VCU should be defamed. It is indefensible."

The CT failed to reach the student who filed the complaint.